



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY  
MIKE STRAIN DVM  
COMMISSIONER



BOLL WEEVIL ERADICATION COMMISSION MEETING

October 31, 2008

10:00 A.M.

Scott Research & Extension Education Center  
212 Macon Ridge Rd.  
Winnsboro, LA 71295

Minutes

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Logan at 10:05 A.M.

**ROLL CALL**

The roll was called by Eva Wales.

Members present: Commissioner Mike Strain DVM, Dr. Roger Leonard, Danny Logan, Jack Dailey, Boyd Holley, George Lacour and Dan Turner

Members absent: none

Others present: Travis Walker, Boll Weevil Eradication Commission alternate member; Dr. Ralph Bagwell, LSU Ag Center; LDAF employees Todd Parker, Marc Bordelon, Craig Roussel, Kurt Moreau, Dan Tullos, John Dumas, Nolan Adcock, Gene Edmondson, Rick Sibley, Nathan Oliver, David Osborn, Vernon Thomas, Jennifer Holoman, Dave Hutto, Tom Winegeart and Eva Wales; Ken Pierce, USDA APHIS-PPQ; Brian Breaux, Louisiana Farm Bureau and Jess Barr, Louisiana Cotton Producers.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion:** Mr. Dailey made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 2, 2008 meeting.

This motion was seconded by Commissioner Strain and passed unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Bordelon gave a report of 2008 assessments as follows: 295,250 acres certified;

\$1,758,685 collected to date; \$16,711 outstanding (including late fees); 8 liens in place.

Due to crop damage from the hurricanes, we may not collect on some of the liens because the cotton wasn't harvested. Any assessments not collected through the lien process will be sent to our legal department for collection.

Mr. Bordelon gave an update on the 2007 research cotton that wasn't reported. He stated that following department protocol, the producer was sent a letter of non-compliance. In the future, letters will be sent to chemical companies with research cotton informing them that all cotton must be reported.

**REPORT FROM COMMISSIONER STRAIN**

Dr. Strain expressed his appreciation to commission members for their support. He gave a brief report on the affects of the hurricanes to Louisiana agriculture, noting that more than 60% of the state's crops were either damaged or destroyed. He is concerned that the Boll Weevil Program may be directly impacted in several ways, including weevil disbursement from hurricane winds and additional expenses related to the hurricanes.

Dr. Strain gave a brief overview of program funding, stating that the expected reduction in cotton acres next year will definitely affect our budget. He stated that the drop in oil price will impact state revenue, possibly resulting in across-the-board budget cuts next year. The budget for this fiscal year is being reviewed and hopefully we won't see any mid-year cuts.

Dr. Strain addressed issues affecting cotton acreage and agriculture in general. The high cost of fuel and fertilizer must be addressed, as well as the instability in commodity prices. He stated that securing federal assistance for our farmers is a priority; he will be in Washington DC in December to address this.

### **UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR**

Mr. Bordelon gave a slide presentation comparing 2007 and 2008 activities as follows (copies on file):

- 1) Total Acres Sprayed – 2008/635,600 acres; 2007/500,000 acres. Mr. Bordelon noted rain and wind in mid August followed by hurricanes Gustav and Ike in September.
- 2) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Goals for LA BWEP – 90% reduction in weevil population annually (compare using total trap catch after 8/1 of the two years in comparison).
- 3) LA Boll Weevil Reduction 2007 & 2008 Total Fall Weevils Caught - 81,900 weevils caught 8/1/07 - 10/31/07 compared to 10,682 weevils caught for the same period in 2008 (87% reduction). Mr. Bordelon stated that we are catching large numbers of weevils in fields that have been destroyed for three weeks, possibly ancestral overwintering sites with weevils migrating to these areas. He stated that fields have been isolated and will be targeted next year. Discussion followed. Dr. Leonard stated that next year's protocol will be very important in these areas. Dr. Bagwell acknowledged the weevil reduction and stated that the increase in application early this year was definitely beneficial.
- 4) LA Boll Weevil Trap Catch 2007 & 2008 – Total weevils caught through 10/27 of each year - 85,091 in 2007 compared to 13,925 in 2008 (84% reduction).
- 5) LA Boll Weevil Reduction 2007 and 2008 Full Year – 85% reduction.
- 6) TAC Goals for LA BWEP – 75% functionally eradicated after completion of the 2009 growing season (functionally eradicated is defined as no evidence of boll weevil reproduction combined with an average trap catch of less than 0.001 weevils per trap inspection)
- 7) Percent of Fields Functionally Eradicated – Fall 2008 by Work Unit – Jonesville 76%, Winnsboro 80%, Monroe 69% and Oak Grove 75% (all include fields with no reproduction).

There was a discussion regarding trapping protocol issues. Mr. Bordelon acknowledged the concern that some traps may be low; however, he stressed the necessity of keeping traps standing. He added that our employees do all they can, but some producers continue to be uncooperative. Mr. Pierce emphasized the importance of functional traps and noted that trap height may not make a significant difference. Discussion followed regarding weevils on the experiment station. Dr. Leonard stated that the situation is improved, but not completely resolved. Trap catches averaged 20 weevils per cycle; two weevils were caught last week. He stated that trapping on the station has been effective and every field was sprayed at least twice per week. He added that weevils were caught around non-cotton areas that couldn't be treated, with 80%-90% caught on the fringes of the station. He addressed the possibility that weevils may be coming out of hay bales. Discussion followed. Mr. Pierce stated that hay bales could provide the adequate heat process for weevils to hibernate. Further discussion followed. Dr. Strain asked if the Ag Center could do a preliminary study.

**Motion:** Mr. Holley made a motion that the TAC look at weevils overwintering in hay bales and the impact this could have on the program. The motion was seconded by Dr. Strain and passed unanimously.

Mr. Lacour expressed appreciation to the TAC. Mr. Bordelon and Commission members expressed appreciation for Commissioner Strain's support in securing the funds which allowed us to implement the TAC's recommendations. Dr. Leonard stated that the next two years will be critical and stressed the importance of continuing an aggressive protocol, if funding allows. Dr. Strain stated that he is working with Governor Jindal on ways to supplement our appropriations.

Mr. Bordelon thanked our employees for their hard work and dedication. He introduced the following new employees: Jennifer Holoman (hired as Jonesville secretary), Vernon Thomas (promoted to Oak Grove Manager) and Dan Tullos (promoted to Jonesville Assistant Field Unit Supervisor.)

Mr. Barr stated that some producers have voiced concern as to how completely stalks are destroyed with the all-in-one plow. Mr. Bordelon stated that even though it may not look good, stalks should be severed at the root if units are set up correctly. Mr. Edmondson added that we ask producers to shred turnrows first because they can be missed when this plow is used. Further discussion followed.

**Motion:** Mr. Holley made a motion that the TAC review the effectiveness of the all-in-one plow and make recommendations accordingly. This motion was seconded by Mr. Lacour and passed unanimously.

### **TECHANICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) REPORT**

Dr. Bagwell reported that the TAC recognizes how difficult the final years of eradication can be and that programs must be adaptable, especially when weevil numbers are very low. He stated that the TAC will work with the program to make protocol changes necessary to achieve complete eradication. Discussion followed regarding volunteer cotton and weevil re-infestation, with Dr. Bagwell noting that Texas has re-infestation in the Southern Rolling Plains, one of the first areas of Texas to achieve eradication.

### **USDA REPORT**

Mr. Pierce gave a brief update on eradication at the national level as follows: Oklahoma is weevil free for three years after eliminating migration from northeast Texas; Arkansas continues to catch weevils in the Portland area; Mississippi is catching weevils in the southeast and has increased trapping to determine the source; Texas has re-infestation around Corpus Christi. He stated that Louisiana is on target; however, next year will be very important. Discussion followed regarding weevil migration into Louisiana.

There was a discussion regarding changes within the Farm Service Agency (FSA) that may affect our assessment collection. Mr. Roussel stated that we have secured an extension for 2009 and will continue to work with FSA.

### **FARM BUREAU OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Breaux reported that he talked with producers from various areas of the state and received comments as follows: program is very effective; personnel are able to do their jobs and concentrate on eradication; improvement in timely Malathion applications. He stated that two concerns were voiced - the security of the Malathion label for boll weevil eradication and the increasing problem with volunteer cotton. He recommended that these issues be addressed in upcoming newsletters.

### **ADDITIONAL BUISNESS**

There was a discussion regarding trapping where cotton is planted row-to-row with other crops. Mr. Bordelon stated that we have producers who won't allow us access for trap placement. Dr. Leonard stressed the importance of trapping all sides. Discussion followed regarding the legality of destroying cotton to gain access for trapping. This will be referred to our legal department for review.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 P.M.